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ABSTRACT

Results of a conference of educational leaders who were interested in teaching about China in secondary education are presented in this report. Points noted in the opening statement are the importance of cross-cultural understanding and the organization of China study in secondary education. The contents of a working paper, designed as a basis for discussion, review the history of China study and how to assist the teacher with substance, materials, and teaching methods. The topics of the conference are summarized under thematic headings. One theme, the need to develop priorities for China study, focuses on how to integrate China studies into existing programs. A teaching demonstration and a panel with high school students emphasize the theme of meeting teachers' and students' needs. Other themes are multimedia materials, multi-organizational cooperation, and financial support. Suggested recommendations are the development of demonstration program packages, collaboration with other organizations, and the urging of inservice and preservice training involving China study as part of teacher education curricula. Rapporteur's conclusions on the strengths and weaknesses of the conference are followed by a list of the participants. (KSM)

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CHINA IN THE SCHOOLS:

DIRECTIONS AND PRIORITIES

Wingspread Conference

sponsored by

The National Committee on United States-China Relations

in cooperation with

The Center for War/Peace Studies

and

The Johnson Foundation

June, 1972

Report prepared by

Arne J. de Keijzer

INTRODUCTION

The Wingspread Conference on China in the Schools: Direction and Priorities was convened in June, 1972 by The National Committee on United States-China Relations, in cooperation with The Center for War/Peace Studies and The Johnson Foundation.

In convening this Conference we recognized that it is necessary for a generation of Americans approaching adulthood and citizen responsibility to have accurate information about the society of 800 million people living in the People's Republic of China.

The Wingspread Conference brought together leaders in education for a look at what should and can be done with respect to teaching about China in secondary education, and the development of a plan for achieving it.

The Johnson Foundation's interest in China stems from the early years of this institution when in 1959, The Johnson Foundation cooperated with the University of Cincinnati in a conference on United States relations with China. A major conference on Mainland China was convened in 1966 by the University of Chicago and the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, in cooperation with The Johnson Foundation. This event provided one of the early opportunities for Americans in the Midwest to learn about China from persons who had visited the People's Republic of China. It is significant to recall that at that time United States' citizens were not free to enter Mainland China, and therefore our principal source of information was journalists and scholars from other countries.

In the past year, The Johnson Foundation has cooperated with the National Committee on United States-China Relations in several projects with the goal of extending knowledge in the United States about the People's Republic of China. These efforts are predicated on the belief that citizens must be informed if they are to have responsibility in evaluating this nation's policies relating to other countries, including the People's Republic of China.

To further this goal, we are pleased to make available to educators and other interested persons this Wingspread Report on China in the Schools: Direction and Priorities.

Leslie Paffrath
President
The Johnson Foundation

Suddenly China has invaded our attention. The historic steps toward normalizing relations between our countries have generated an avid curiosity about things Chinese -- from sports to politics, fashions to acupuncture. In this new atmosphere there is also an increasing demand for sound, intelligent information about the People's Republic. This is particularly marked in the secondary schools, where relatively little has yet been done to further the study of China.

Although useful conferences have been held in recent years to discuss the state of Asian and Chinese studies in the schools,[1] there had been little movement from analysis to action. Options and alternative directions remained ill-defined, and there was no co-ordinated planning. The National Committee fully realized that overcoming this problem could not and should not be the sole responsibility of any one organization. And, while implementation would fall largely to local school teachers and administrators, stimulating their work, and providing the necessary resources, required action by others. Thus, with the impetus afforded by today's headlines, the National Committee and the Center for War/Peace Studies, as conference organizers, sought to stimulate a sense of shared responsibility among various organizations concerned with improving education about China in secondary schools.

The conference thus brought together a group of leaders professionally concerned with this field: foundations and government funding agencies; professional associations; China scholars; national and regional organizations concerned with advancing popular understanding of China; publishers and media experts; and curriculum planners and teachers who already had made significant contributions.[2] The participants would review what should and can be done with respect to China in secondary education and attempt to develop strategies for achieving the desired goals.

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1. A recently published report of one such conference is Asian Studies In American Secondary Education, a report on two conferences sponsored by the Association for Asian Studies and the U.S. Office of Education (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972).

2. A list of participants is attached.

The principal background reference was the draft manuscript of the National Committee-sponsored publication, China: A Resource and Curriculum Guide,[3] a comprehensive inventory and evaluation of most existing materials available to educators, including curriculum materials, audio-visual materials, resource centers, books, and other publications.

Although the conference was deliberative, with participants engaged primarily in roundtable discussion, Dr. Wilbur J. Cohen, Dean of the School of Education at the University of Michigan and former Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, was asked to deliver an opening statement. Also, a working paper designed as a basis for discussion was prepared by H. Thomas Collins, Director of the Schools Program of the Center for War/Peace Studies.

Dean Cohen stressed the importance of cross-cultural understanding in general, particularly since "a large proportion of our population still maintains a strong geographic and ethnic relationship with some other country." China is an excellent model for such multi-cultural understanding, and can be instructive, for example, in its comprehensive health delivery system, an area in which we spend 7% of our GNP without adequately serving large segments of our population. China is not only intrinsically important, therefore, but is an invaluable mirror in which to reflect on the social fabric of the United States. With our nation now tackling the problem of "renewing" itself, we cannot hope to change our values unless we can look at ourselves through the perspective of another experience. Thus, Cohen said, "I believe we are at a most important historical moment, when we can seize this framework of new friendship and opportunity with China, coupled with a moment of great alienation and frustration in our society, to . . . open a new door and new opportunity for freshness and vitality in our social system."

Education for these new values needs to be implemented throughout our country's 18,000 school districts. To affect a change of such magnitude, Dean Cohen charged the conferees to focus on an area which has so far suffered from tremendous neglect: the Schools of Education. He pledged for a whole new approach to multi-ethnic understanding through the revitalization of our 1200 schools of education with the cooperation of foundations, government, China centers, and other interested organizations -- such as those represented at this conference.

This led to Dr. Cohen's general recommendations on how to organize and finance the study of China's history and society in American secondary education. Improvement should not be the sole responsibility of any one

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3. The University of Chicago Press, November, 1972.

funding agency or implementing organization. No change was possible without a long-range instrument, one free of the problems of cyclical re-funding and momentary political glamor and which could define precisely the role of all parties concerned with this effort. Thus, he suggested that the conferees concentrate on "the development and the drafting of a piece of federal legislation to be considered and adopted by Congress which incorporates a ten-year plan for a Consortium relationship for Asian Studies."

Mr. Collins' background paper on "Problems and Opportunities in Improving Secondary Education in China" was not discussed by the conferees in its entirety, but its themes received recurrent attentions, and some of its recommendations constitute the "action" part of this report.[4]

Collins traced the history of China studies in the schools, noting how it blossomed when Americans "discovered" China in the late 1950's and early 1960's. This caused a change in emphasis from "should we" study China to "how" and "what" to teach. Part of the answer was provided by government-funded projects, which aided teacher training institutes (NDEA Centers) on the one hand, and curriculum development projects (e.g. Asian Studies Curriculum Project) the other. Collins felt that these two programs -- the training efforts which emphasized substance and the development projects concerned with techniques and content -- often led teachers in different, and sometimes incompatible, directions.

He went on to ask educators to listen more to the "client," noting the concerns facing today's social studies teacher: new teaching methods (i.e. inquiry); an abundance of new materials (by the mid-60's there were over 50 series of soft-covered publications which covered China); pressure to deal with an unfamiliar area; and, a fundamental shift in the public's perception of the role of the school itself. Collins concluded that for China studies in the schools to have a chance, "teachers will need very specific kinds of help if they're going to be able to make these changes."

A teacher wishing to teach about China faces several particular problems -- ones of substance (how can I find out about China, and what is important to know about it?), materials (which are reliable?), and teaching methods (lecture, inquiry, etc.).

To solve the problem of how best to assist the teacher, Collins noted some of the "standard" solutions which usually surfaced at conferences such

4. The complete paper is available from the Center for War/Peace Studies, 218 East 18th Street, New York City, 10003.

as this one, and suggested instead what he felt were viable, working alternatives. For example, a newsletter is usually suggested to improve the communications problem. Collins felt, however, that this only compounded the problem by duplicating work and competing for attentions. As an alternative, one could take an existing newsletter, such as Focus on Asian Studies,[5] ensure greater China input, and have it distributed through the much wider network of the National Council for the Social Studies.

Other alternatives suggested by Mr. Collins included exchange visits to China on a teacher-administrator team basis (rather than as ad hoc individuals), in-service workshops held in local schools and including pre-service teachers and scholars (instead of requiring release time, travel, etc.), the development of program "packages" on China for educators at major professional meetings, and a series of written evaluations for all educational materials available.

Above all, he concluded, anyone seeking to implement change in the schools must pay more attention to the teacher's and student's needs. This theme, too, was re-emphasized throughout the conference.

CONFERENCE THEMES

The chairman of the conference, William Delano, opened the meeting by making clear that the participants had come not to "justify" China studies, not to develop substantive materials; their concerns were "strategic" and he urged discussion of solutions, not obstacles. As the meeting progressed, several topics seemed to recur, and can be summarized under the following thematic headings:

1. Priority for China Studies

One theme of the conference was the need to develop a sense of priority for China studies in secondary education. The participants clearly recognized that China was only one among many "priorities" which legitimately claim the attention of teachers and, although China may now have special importance, a "push China above all else" approach was deemed unrealistic. Rather, discussion focused on how best to integrate China

5. This quarterly newsletter, edited by Frank Buchanan, is available from the Service Center for Teachers of Asian Studies, College of Education, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 43210.

Participants at the conference table

study into existing programs, since Chinese society provides unique examples applicable to a wide range of subjects. The participants agreed that workshops and programs should be prepared to demonstrate to teachers how China can be a topical handle for a variety of courses: multi-ethnic education; "problems and values" classes; "discipline" courses such as geography, comparative politics, and so on; and, for such common social studies issues as pollution, drugs, family system, defense priorities, etc. As Elgin Heinz noted, China can be a vehicle for helping teachers to do more effectively what they already are trying to do.

2. The Teacher as Client

Even if China were established as a priority in the classroom, it is largely the teacher who will determine the learning experience of the students. This was demonstrated at the conference by the students who played an important role. The participants together observed a teaching demonstration with a local 6th grade class and invited six high school seniors to discuss their knowledge of, and exposure to, China through school courses. This served to remind all that although it may be a cliche, it is the child that is important in education, and not just the subject.

Organizations and conferences planning or hypothesizing curriculum change too often are divorced from the constituencies they are supposed to serve. It was agreed that a systematic means of finding out what teachers need was essential. Merrill Hartshorn and John Kourmadas together pointed out, by citing several highly advertised and acclaimed series that were never widely adopted, that it is not merely the materials themselves or their method of presentation that put teachers off, but chiefly their nonapplicability. Too much classroom material has been written without reference to what the teacher wants and <u>can</u> do at particular grade levels.

Picking up on Dean Cohen's theme, the participants saw the need to relate to teachers at the beginning of their training; that is, in the Schools of Education. One goal of these schools should be to develop teachers who are broad-gauged, and who can adapt and absorb material on a wide variety of subjects, confident enough in their knowledge and approach to use new and innovative materials in a classroom situation. The social and political issues raised by the study of China could be most relevant and lively vehicle in such a training process.

As a contribution to this process, participants urged that pre-service workshops be developed along the lines suggested in Tom Collins' paper: workshops emphasizing China Studies <u>within</u> selected teacher training

institutions, involving students, faculty, teacher trainees, and China scholars at the respective universities. Additionally, such workshops would expose future teachers to the support facilities locally available. In the San Francisco area, for example, regional cooperation of organizations might be fostered through the American Society for Eastern Arts, the Diablo Valley Project, the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, the Stanford and Berkeley China Centers, or several of the teacher education schools in the area, utilizing teachers already teaching about China.

The key to effective in-service training was seen as giving the teacher perspectives and information he can immediately use, and motivating him to do so. Several clear steps were taken in these directions. The Center for War/Peace Studies and the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations agreed to develop a "package program" for inclusion in professional educational meetings as an initial "turn-on" experience for teachers, administrators, and relevant organizations. Further, because teachers need a supportive local environment to follow up their interests, workshops will be held within local schools, thereby avoiding such problems as release time, finances, and so on. With fellow teachers involved, the motivation to attend such workshops, and to return to the classroom with new, applicable ideas, would be better reinforced.

The problem of workshop content -- what should teachers know and teach about China -- was considered crucial, but not an appropriate topic for this conference. It was recommended that a follow-up conference be planned to deal specifically with content and methods, and to involve teachers, students, and scholars alike. Conferees urged that China scholars become sensitized to the needs of teachers and actively participate in local workshops, not just as "visiting lecturers," but as integrally involved in a two-way process.

3. Teachers and Scholars: A New Mesh

> The teacher has no Asia background, he has lousy texts and his kids can't read them anyway, and there is no money available. Just what is it that a China scholar can do for me?

This is the way John Ellington summed up the feelings of several educators -- that the China scholar is the "last" person to call on, since he is unattuned to the needs of secondary education.

There is great potential for change in this situation, however. More and more scholars are becoming aware of the needs of educators, willing to learn and share experiences, and concerned about the inadequacy of what is being taught about China in the schools. The growing desire among scholars to make their work more socially "relevant" is being reinforced by a recent decision by the Office of Education to redirect its support of the NDEA Title VI foreign language and area studies centers. Robert Leestma pointed out that in the future, NDEA China centers will be expected to devote specific attention to elementary and secondary education and teacher training, as well as to producing academic specialists in Chinese studies. Although the number of such centers will be reduced, average grants may be somewhat larger than in the past.

Getting teachers and China scholars together, therefore, was seen as an innovation for this field. A particular recommendation which was well received by most participants was Jonathan Spence's idea to develop a roster of China scholars willing to become directly involved with secondary education. The "scholar consultants" would be sensitized to the needs of educators and work with state and local school systems. The production of China specialists in the past 15 years has been sufficient to create a large resource base, and the manpower available for such an effort.[6] Moreover, this concept fits well with the idea of developing regional service centers which would join schools of education, teachers, China scholars, community organizations, school administrators and curriculum specialists, etc. in a common enterprise.

Several actions were agreed upon. The National Committee, through its own resources, will identify scholars willing and able to play a consulting role, and make these lists widely available. It will also explore the role of its present university field staff program in the development of regional centers and in promoting the dialog between scholars and teachers through workshops and other programs. Sarah Benet offered the complete cooperation of her Boston Center in any program that included the kind of longer-term area training for teachers she has developed.

Although this concept needs much refining in terms of specific programs and projects, there was encouragement that funding for such an effort might be possible.

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6. In his Understanding China: An Assessment of American Scholarly Resource (New York: Praeger, 1971), John Lindbeck list 412 PhD's awarded in China Studies between 1960 and 1969. Using his projections, 150 more have probably been awarded in the past 3 years.

4. Media

Another theme of the Wingspread conference was the importance of imaginative use of classroom and educational television, and the value of current public interest in China as a topical handle. Among other possibilities, the participants discussed preparing an ETV series on China applicable to secondary schools. Other ideas discussed were the use of video and audio-cassettes, simulation games, and even comic books.

This discussion served to underscore one of the unique aspects of the conference -- bringing people of diverse constituencies in contact with each other. Thus, Howard Spergel, with the aid of several other participants, promised to actively explore the possibilities of developing a media package, and in combining pictures and print in new ways.

5. Multi-organizational Cooperation

The participants also discussed Dean Cohen's idea of a Consortium for Asian Studies. Although a new "super-organization" was deemed unfeasible at this time, there was a clear need to improve communication between organizations concerned with the field. This coincided with a feeling expressed by James Becker, among others, that any improvements discussed by the conferees should be implemented as far as possible by making better use of existing institutions rather than the formation of new ones.

There was positive response to the notion that relevant organizations and institutions should be identified so as to better link the available resources with the delivery system. Better communication -- at the minimum by each organization present placing the others on their respective mailing list -- and vigorous joint efforts by existing organizations was considered more practical than the creation of a new consortium, at least for the present. In particular, large and active professional organizations such as the American Council on Education and the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education should be consulted and urged to cooperate. This would help ensure effective follow-up with local schools, since an organization like the AACTE has some 7,000 college constituents.

As a specific example of the need for better communication and the effective use of existing vehicles, the conference considered Focus on Asian Studies. Frank Buchanan stated that it now reached 3,000 teachers but, since the recent expiration of an interim AAS subsidy, received no outside funding support. Several participants agreed to follow this up, with the

suggestion that, through Social Education, Focus could reach a much larger audience, and that the Association for Asian Studies should be encouraged to financially support this valuable publication.

6. Financial Support

Participants were generally encouraged by the prospects for funding the kinds of projects under discussion. By their absence, it was noted that several of the major foundations may not be interested in international studies in secondary education. The private foundations seemed most reluctant to enter this field, unless in some very defined and specified areas, e.g. teacher "motivation" or media-related projects.

Congressional support for international education seemed to be somewhat on the upswing, although several of the participants observed that international education as a grand concept was too vague to be "sold" to Congress, and that a specific, topical, approach such as China studies might be better received. The Congressional trend against authorizing categorical grants is balanced by a movement toward institutional aid, e.g. toward Schools of Education, which could be harnessed for international studies if carefully exploited.

It was suggested that the National Committee could offer itself as an umbrella under which funding proposals could be written, or at least aid in identifying potential sources of support and as a clearinghouse for those organizations wishing to coordinate proposals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It was the collective judgment of the participants that specific action proposals and a self-generated feeling of communication were more useful in affecting change -- and have more likelihood of being implemented -- than the formulation of general principles or a grand scheme. Accordingly, in addition to the informal agreement to communicate on future projects which came out of the conference, the following actions were agreed upon:

A) The National Committee on U.S.-China Relations and the Center for War/Peace Studies will prepare flexible demonstration program packages for use at major educational meetings. These packages will include content on China, teaching methodology, and teaching materials.

The need to adapt to regional, state and local meetings was stressed. It was suggested that these programs include demonstrations by classroom teachers, since peer group demonstrations are more likely to attract interest and motivate teachers than "authority lectures."

B) The National Committee and the Center will collaborate with other interested institutions to:

1. Identify China scholars with interest, competence, and empathy for working with teachers at the elementary and secondary level;

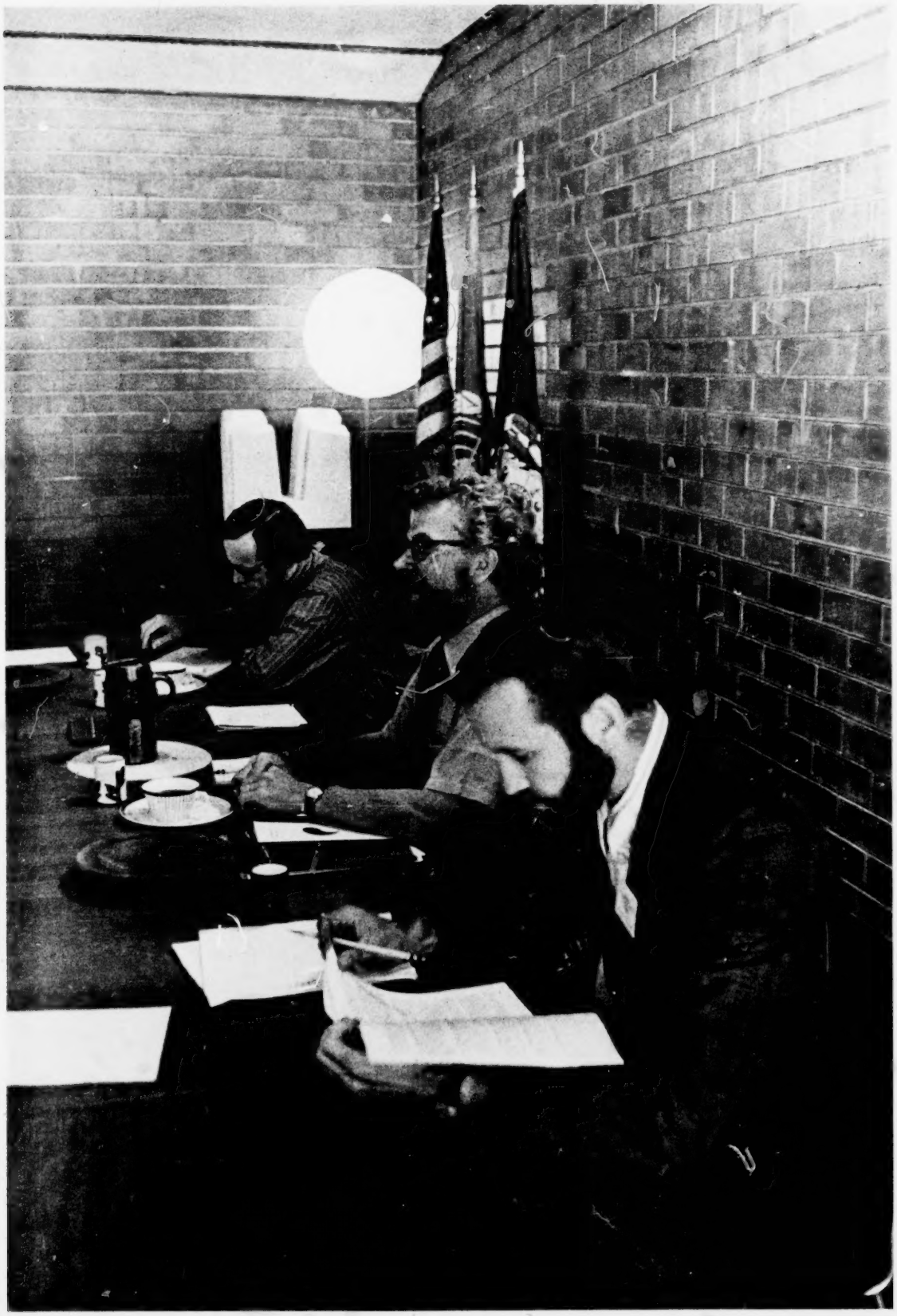
2. Organize conferences and workshops to orient and prepare such China scholars to make their expertise available at the secondary level; and,

3. Actively seek government and private funding to enable China specialists to become actively involved with state and local school systems and Schools of Education on the curriculum and methodologies of China study.

This relates to the general concern, as reflected in the new funding priorities, of the government agencies in relating higher education to elementary and secondary education. It also incorporates the idea of the scholar as resource person, and making the list of such specialists available to educators, state supervisors, social studies specialists, curriculum planners, and so on. The conference participants realized that identification of scholars either capable of or interested in interacting with public school teachers would be a difficult task. Several of the participants had reservations about the concept in general.

C) The National Committee and the Center for War/Peace Studies invite other interested institutions to join them in urging the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education to help implement in-service and pre-service training of elementary and secondary school teachers in curriculum and methodologies of China study.

D) Focus on Asian Studies should be strengthened, properly subsidized and more widely distributed.



Arne J. de Keijzer, William A. Delano, Douglas Murray (left to right)

This was seen as one of the keystones of the kind of multi-organizational cooperation advocated by the participants. An approach to the Association for Asian Studies will be made for support, and the National Council on the Social Studies will be asked to distribute Focus to its 25,000 person mailing list.

Other specific suggestions, which were less formally cast, but generally agreed upon included:

1. actively maintaining and broadening the networt of relationships developed at the Wingspread conference. This includes wide dissemination of the Wingspread report and respective institutional newsletters.

2. develop a follow-up conference dealing with the curriculum content; opening the lines of communication between teachers and China scholars, discussing what to teach about China, and what type of materials would be most suitable.

3. developing an educational television series or single programs, with spin-off use for both classroom and the general public.

4. Although educational exchange programs with the People's Republic of China see some time away, information on this needs to be kept current and circulated, and the most effective constituencies identified.

RAPPORTEUR'S CONCLUSIONS

In retrospect, the conference was stimulating and productive, particularly as a mandate to the organizers for future program development. The prinicple cause for this was the realistic and straightforward approach of the participants, due in part to the unique "mix" of professional concerns represented. The sessions moved quickly and in business-like fashion; there were few soporific generalities or platitudes, and no "grand scheme" for total reform of American secondary education about China diverted attention from realistic possibilities. This resulted in some optimism that the shared concerns and specific recommendations of the participants were not only viable, but already on their way to implementation.

The constructive climate of the conference was enhanced by the general feeling that the "time was ripe" to get things accomplished. More

organizations were concerned about doing something, from China Centers and the Congress to government agencies and professional educational organizations such as NCSS, AACTE, CSSA and the Committee for the Future of International Studies.

There were, of course, relevant concerns by some which were not adequately discussed. The scholars in particular felt the need to have teachers and scholars improve their perceptions of each other, but few details were spelled out. The development of regional service centers, felt by some to deserve higher priority, also was little discussed. The outline of a specific mechanism to ensure the coordination, dissemination and appropriate funding approach (such as Dr. Cohen's proposed legislation to form a Consortium) would have been desired by some. To the regret of all participants, some of Mr. Collins' specific recommendations were not considered.

Most conferees, however, left the conference ready to serve and to be served, through shared responsibility for improved communication, joint programs, better use of existing delivery mechanisms, and more awareness of the needs of teachers. The National Committee and the Center for War/Peace Studies benefitted immensely from the deliberations, and immediately began the process of trying to implement the actions agreed upon.

John Wilson Lewis and Robert Leestma
in conversation at Wingspread

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